# THE CHRISTIAN EAST

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## COMMENTS AND NOTES

THE general picture of conditions in Church life in those countries that are within the Soviet orbit, or which have a Communist government, is becoming increasingly familiar to us. The repetition of the same pattern in these countries precludes the hope of some that there is exaggeration and political bias in the descriptions that reach us of the conditions under which our Christian brethren are living their life there to-day. His Grace the Archbishop of York has recently spoken in the House of Lords on the matter, giving in the five progressive stages of Communist control of the Church a clear summary of the course followed in the countries involved.

We venture to recommend two recent publications on the subject. The first is a strictly documentary record compiled by Mr. J. B. Barron and the Rev. H. M. Waddams, published by the S.C.M. Press (4/-), with a foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This by quoting actual Communistic enactments and declarations without comment provides an unbiased account of what has been and is taking place in these countries. The book does not deal with the attitude of the Christians involved, although there are a few quotations from Christian leaders which bear directly on the main subject of the book. It is a most valuable and informative production, and covers the ground in the U.S.S.R., Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and also Yugoslavia.

The other publication is a full-scale book of some three hundred pages with the title *Must Night Fall?* by Major Tufton Beamish, M.C., M.P., published by Hollis and Carter at 12/6.

Once again, it deals with four of the satellite states, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania. While the outlook is mainly political, it does not neglect the Christian aspect of the general situation; indeed a chapter of the book is devoted to religion, which covers the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant fields. Major Beamish knows south-eastern Europe too well not to realize that religion still plays a more prominent part in the thought-life and practical affairs of these countries and nations than we tend to realize here. Continually throughout the book, carefully documented and illustrated by many personal contacts of the author, is the urgent desire, very forcefully expressed, to warn the free nations, and particularly ourselves in this country of the imminent peril of night falling on Europe. The book is really a study of Marxism in practice in four countries, with the conclusions to be drawn from such a study.

We can only infer the plight of those Christians in whom we are vitally interested: they cannot yet speak for themselves. First-hand information of what their sufferings are is hard to come by, and usually unwise to publish when learned. But it is important for us to realize that the Christian Church is not, as many politicians consciously or subconsciously take for granted, a useful bulwark of the ancient European civilization which we inherit and share, and which is already largely disintegrating. The Church can survive the breakdown of a civilization, and has done so more than once in her history. She is not the handmaid of civilization nor the bridge from one civilization to a new one, but has within herself the divine regenerative power against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. To conserve her own life, sometimes only the very core of her life, is not necessarily an attitude of despair and self-betrayal, but the outcome of faith in her undying life in Christ. Until we ourselves share in the persecution and sufferings of these countries, themselves indeviated to persecution during many centuries, we shall not easily be able to enter into the agonizing problems of how far it is right to give way to *force majeure*, in order that the actual survival of the Church may wait upon the day of liberty and regeneration.

The Marxist gospel is apocalyptic, finding its inspiration although stripped of all theistic conceptions in the Jewish interpretation of history, which has always tended to look for a kingdom of the Messiah, a reign of perfect equity and happiness for mankind on earth. To bring about this Utopia successive generations are to work, to suffer and cause others to suffer through gigantic conflict until it is realized. To the Marxist there is no other end to history, and a transcendent Kingdom of Heaven beyond this world in which falsehood and wrong will be finally requited and resolved is a chimæra, an evil expedient to keep the human race in submissive resignation to its earthly lot. This fantastic and cruel gospel is being put into practice wherever Communism has gained the upper hand. It provides an answer to present suffering and privation for the benefit of a future age which is yet unborn. It absorbs into itself and gives a teleological meaning to all progress in material well-being, all struggle against human injustice and privilege. But in the long run it can only be judged by results, and if the results show themselves to be illusory, those who live in subjection to the regime of the all-powerful State and the Secret Police, regarded by Communists as necessary means to their great end, will only await the hour when they can be liberated. The details of this sombre picture are filling themselves in before our eyes. The power of our common Christian Gospel, common to us and our suffering brethren, is the only dynamic that can awaken the world from this evil dream of men increasingly powerful in the material means to subjugate the ignorant and weak.

We note with interest the consecration of the first native Chinese Orthodox bishop. On July 30th the Patriarch of Moscow, assisted by the Metropolitans Nicholas Krutitsi and Eleutherius of Prague, together with Victor, Archbishop of Peking, and two of the bishops, consecrated the Archimandrite Simeon as Bishop of Tien-Tsin.

The Russian Church began its Missions in China towards the end of

the seventeenth century, and has thus had many generations of native Chinese Christians. In Peking itself it owns a large estate, the Bei-Guan, where the Archbishop lives. In 1940 there appears to have been nearly a quarter of a million Chinese in the churches and schools all over that great country. The policy of the present Communist government towards religion in China seems to be closely modelled on that of Soviet Russia. The Prime Minister, Chou-En-Lai, is himself Minister of Cults. The Chinese Orthodox are in a privileged category and are not molested. Anglicans are more or less tolerated, after the reignations of their bishops of foreign origin, while the federated Protestants appear to have come to terms with the government through their National Christian Council. Roman Catholics, regarded by the Communists as spies and foreign agents, are being harshly treated and gradually squeezed out in the time-honoured Chinese way. The Catholic university of Peking has been closed.

The Reverend Anthony Bloom, for some time now acting as Orthodox Chaplain to St. Basil's House, Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, has been appointed to the charge of the Russian Parish in London, under the Moscow jurisdiction. He succeeds the Reverend Vladimir Theocritoff, so well known and regarded by all friends of Anglican and Orthodox relations. We offer to Father Bloom, who is a member of the editing committee of *The Christian East*, our sincerest good wishes on his appointment to this responsible and onerous work, and know that we shall have his own support and interest.

For many generations the Orthodox Theological College of the Holy Trinity on the island of Halki in the Propontis, close to the ancient capital of Turkey, Istanbul, has been an important training-ground for the clergy and hierarchy of the Balkans and Near East. Built on the summit of perhaps the most beautiful of the four Propontic islands and housed in splendid and impressive buildings, the college has been passing through a period of great difficulty and stress. Both in the matter of staffing and of students there have been serious impediments to growth and adequacy. We are therefore rejoiced to hear that on the one hand the government ban on the acceptance of students from outside Turkey has now been lifted, and that on the other, the staff of the college has been augmented by the return of Mr. Basil Anagnostopoulos, after an academic career at Oxford of brilliance and promise. The college is Stavopegaic, under the direct jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarch. We had in this country a distinguished link with it in the person of the late Metropolitan of Thyateira, who was its Director as Metropolitan of Seleucia, and the spiritual Father and teacher of so many Orthodox prelates and clergy to-day. We wish the college a renewed life of prosperity and distinction.

At the Phanar itself, the greatly revered and respected Metropolitan of Imbros and Tenedos, Jacobus, has been recalled to the city as Metropolitan of Derkos, one of the important living dioceses of the city. Born in Konga, the ancient Iconium of Asia Minor, the Metropolitan has an intimate knowledge of the Turkish-speaking world, and has for long been a powerful spiritual influence and a member of Holy Synod. He is succeeded by Mgr. Melitou Hadjis, for some years in charge of the Greek community and

church in Manchester in this country, and recalled from that work to become Grand Vicar of the Patriarchate. To these two firm friends of many of us here we offer our respects and the assurance of our prayers.

We await with great interest the plans and programme for the celebration in Greece this summer of the twentieth centenary of St. Paul's first visits to the country, which presumably will take place at the time of the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul at the end of June. These celebrations have been postponed a year, and were originally planned for 1950. Unfortunately no fixed programme has yet been received in this country.

From Bulgaria we hear that the Bulgarian government has finally secularized Sofia University, where the Orthodox Faculty of Theology has been separated from the university and made a Theological Institute, organized on much the same plan as the theological academies in the U.S.S.R. The new institute will be supported by the Church and will admit graduates of the seminaries for higher training. Similar changes have already been made in Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, but not yet in Poland.

## GREGORIUS THE FIFTH, ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

(1745?—1821)

[This contribution from a correspondent of *The Christian East* opens a page of Orthodox ecclesiastical history little known to readers in the West. The part played by St. Gregory V in the organization of the Ecumenical See is put into its stormy background of the palingenesis of Greece. Ed.]

ORTHODOX Christianity, with its foundation and seat on the south-eastern side of Europe, is able, from among the Patriarchs who have administered and represented it, to point to some personalities who have marked a stage in human history. The Greek Orthodox conception of the function of religion is not limited to educating and guiding the Faithful, but considers the Christian as a complete individual, who although part of the Church is not enslaved by her, preserving his personality to serve the whole. In this we may find the reason for the many-sided activities of the leaders of Orthodoxy. We see personalities who fill their age and leave their personal stamp on the epoch that brought them forth. Such was the Patriarch Gregorius the Fifth.

At the time of his death, the souls of the people of south-east Europe were in a state of turmoil, and prepared to accept his martyrdom as a message from God. The tragedy of the death of the 80-year-old Churchman has for long been a source of moral power to his nation. Later, when the stir he made as a person had settled, this tragedy became a creative incentive both to the people and the Church. To this very day his monument with the signs of his martyrdom at his feet can be seen in Athens, an incontrovertible proof of the undying value of his sacrifice.

The rise to the Patriarchal throne of a simple cleric (always possible during the Byzantine period and after it) is a proof of the spirit of democracy characteristic of the race. It is also a proof of the deeply-rooted and powerful vitality of the people that is enabled to react to the challenge of con-

ditions as they arise. The Patriarchs who come from families of the aristocracy are few: most of them are sons of the people, who reached prominence through their personal efforts and qualifications.

Gregorius was in fact a son of the people. He was born at Demetsana, a small town of the Peloponnese, round about the year 1745. His family name was Angellopoulos. Neither the date of his birth nor the financial status of his family has been found out with certainty. As a lad he was probably a shepherd in the mountains of his native land. The tradition that his family was very poor does not seem to be true; and this is borne out by information given later by Gregorius himself with regard to his home. It is certain, however, that he did his studies later than was usual, and under many difficulties.

Living as he did towards the end of the eighteenth century, Gregorius belongs to a period when Greek culture in the East had matured and become the intellectual system which brought together all the moral powers of a people politically enslaved. Moreover, under the ægis of the Church the religious spirit was brought to bear closely on classical culture. It was in this atmosphere that Gregorius was educated.

His first studies were made at the "Philosophers'" Monastery which existed from before the Ottoman conquest. Later, at the age of about 20, he came to Athens, where he remained for two years, going from there to Smyrna to complete his education. Both these cities were centres of Greek culture, and the young Angellopoulos took full advantage of tuition by famous teachers. He was supported by some monks who were related to him, though not very closely. He stayed in Smyrna for five years and studied at the renowned "Evangelic School," helping his uncle who was sacristan at the Church of St. George. It was then that he met the Metropolitan of Smyrna, Procopius.

George Angellopoulos entered the monastic order at a monastery on one of the islands of the Sporades group, and was given the name of Gregorius. As a monk, he continued his studies at the School of Patmos. From there he was invited to Smyrna by the Metropolitan who ordained him deacon, appointing him immediately after archdeacon and Protosyngellos.

His ecclesiastical activities may be divided into four periods: when he was Metropolitan and when he thrice occupied the throne of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Throughout his ecclesiastical life there is the distinguishing mark of energy, of serious and moral conception of duty, and of refusal to act on mean suggestion or advice. It may be that all his efforts did not meet with success. Had he been more elastic in character, certain of his difficulties might well have been overcome. This lack of flexibility is to be attributed either to a particular idiosyncracy or to a reaction to his environment, both direct and indirect, coming both from the clergy and from society generally, which sharpened his intellectual and moral shrewdness as his powerful character was built up. Such a forcefulness of character tended to give to the ignorant an impression of harshness. According to the evidence of a historian of his age, his simplicity in all the manifestations of his life, and especially his unshaken belief in the Christian religion, were appreciated at their true value by all. But equally well

known was his perseverance in his own ideas and his energy in putting them into effect. Despite all his difficult circumstances, he stood firm and sincere with himself and with the Church, right to the end.

When Gregorius was ordained deacon for the Metropolis of Smyrna he became acquainted with the province and the Orthodox community he had been called upon to serve. He especially felt pity for the population joined recently by many Christians driven out of the Peloponnese. These were victims of the revolution instigated and urged on by Orlov, the general of Catherine the Great of Russia. With them was Gregorius's own family, who had with others taken refuge and settled on the coast of Asia Minor, where the Ottoman local authorities had offered shelter and protection.

On June 29th, 1785, the Metropolitan of Smyrna, Procopius, was called to the Patriarchal throne. In spite of the opposition of the powerful local magnate, A. Manos, he was succeeded in the Metropolitical See by Gregorius. The consecration took place at the Patriarchate in August of the same year, but it was not until October the 14th that Gregorius got back to Smyrna and took over his duties. His consecration was greeted with joy by the people, and even Korais, then living at Montpellier in France, was among the first to congratulate him. The enthusiasm however soon died down, for the Christians of Smyrna were not accustomed to the rule of a man of strong character and firm will. Each one sought to find in the leader the reflection of his own personal interests. Korais, who was aware of the weakness of his compatriots, said in a letter to a friend, dated July 1st, 1790, that even the best of leaders living in such an environment would soon be weakened, corrupted and turned into a devil. This did not happen to Gregorius.

His first act was to work out in collaboration with the leading citizens and the trade corporations of Smyrna the laws regulating the religious and social status of the community. These regulations laid down the moral and financial duties of Christians towards their Church as well as the obligations of the local ecclesiastical authority towards the Christian population. In accordance with the status of a minority in the East, they also involved the establishment of an ecclesiastical tribunal, made up of the bishop and two leading citizens, framed to deal with any personal or family dispute that might arise. Further, to protect the poor of the community he arranged that the capital tax up to that time paid personally by each Christian to the State should be paid by the ecclesiastical fund instead. It would appear that a certain degree of looseness and indifference had crept in with regard to the ecclesiastical rules prescribed by the Synods of the Church, since an order of the Patriarch required that ordinands should have obtained a mastery of the Greek language and be distinguished for their seriousness both in morals and character.

A distinguishing mark of Gregorius's activity is to be found in the restoration of churches. There were two main churches in Smyrna, that of St. Photini, and St. George. Both of them through their antiquity and possibly through the apathy of the Christians were decayed and ready to fall down. Although the erection and the restoration of churches was forbidden by the Moslem state law, Gregorius succeeded with the help of leading

citizens and the payment of much money in obtaining the necessary licence of the state to build five churches. Tradition says that the Metropolitan himself with other Christians helped to carry the building materials. The churches that arose were magnificent, especially that of St. Photini, which was so old that the date of its erection is unknown. They were destroyed in the beginning of the twentieth century by irregular Ottoman hordes. Gregorius also restored the small churches in the villages near the city, and where there were none, erected chapels in the hope of building churches in the future.[1] In 1793 he was nominated Synodikos. This period of his life is not conspicuous for activity of great importance, but some of his regulations in connection with the reorganization of administration of charitable institutions are worthy of attention. In 1794 the Patriarchate decided to restore the hospitals and to provide for the protection of Christians in the state prisons. The election of committees to carry out this work was entrusted to five corporations, and it was arranged that these institutions should be maintained by private funds.

The disturbances that arose in Smyrna in March 1797 as a result of the killing of an Ottoman soldier by a Venetian and the fire and plundering that followed, compelled Gregorius to return at once to the city to help and comfort his flock. It was at this very time that the Patriarch of Constantinople, Gerasimus III, resigned (April 19th). Gregorius, through the patronage and support of Constantine Hantzeris, Interpreter of the Fleet, was elected Patriarch while still in Smyrna.

Gregorius came three times to the Patriarchal throne. His first tenure of office lasted from May 1797 to December 1798; the second from October 1806 to September 1808; the last from December 1818 until his martyrdom on April 10th, 1821. His three periods of rule cover a period of transition in political and social affairs. In Europe monarchy undergoes a natural development, making way for the need of a new system of rule by the people. No such change can take place quietly. In France the people revolt and their declaration of the rights of the individual spreads over Europe. Monarchical states incapable of realizing the necessity of development use every means in their power and especially diplomacy to preserve intact the personal power of their rulers.

There was a strong repercussion of this new spirit in the eastern corner of Europe. The Greek people under the ægis of the Church, and in spite of its oppression by the tyrant from the East, had already reached a state of maturity. Having worked for the civilization for the state in which they lived they now feel the need for political freedom. They are a people educated in Greek thought by their familiarity with the services of the Church. But their leading citizens, although possessing Greek culture, desire to become familiar with the literature of Europe. The Ottoman

[1] Gregorius's biographer, Constantine of Economi, states that during the Metropolitan's stay in Constantinople he dedicated the small church of St. John the Forerunner near the very ancient Byzantine church of the Falling Asleep of the Panagia on the island of Halki in the Propontis. The dedication seems to have taken place in 1797 according to the date written on the lower part of the cross over the main entrance of the church. Both the Byzantine church of the Falling Asleep of the Panagia, and that of St. John Prodromos, restored by Prince Alexander Ypsilanti, are to-day closed by order of the Turkish government, and the premises surrounding the two churches have been occupied.

government appreciates the value of the services rendered by the Christian community, but at the same time is influenced by rulers of other states who are ready to point out the dangers that lie hidden in the spreading of the new ideas. It is at this moment of political and social unrest that Gregorius comes to the Patriarchal throne.

He was prepared to undertake his responsibilities. The Church needed an energetic and unselfish leader, while the general situation called for immediate decisions. Lack of discipline and financial stability were among the first difficulties he had to face. Many bishops under various pretexts continued to live in the capital, leaving the administrations of their dioceses to their representatives. Gregorius forthwith ordered them to return to their sees and retained only those needed to form the Holy Synod.

This was an unwelcome order to the idle, and his further direction to the whole clergy to contribute according to their means to the Patriarchate Fund was no less so. Even the monasteries, hitherto exempt from contributing, were now included. He further reorganized the Spiritual Tribunals, and ordered search in the records for firmans of the Sultans that had granted privileges which in the course of time had lost their working force.

During his three periods of office his activity in the building of churches is shared by the part he took in political affairs. Some churches were built by him in the suburbs of Constantinople, while others of the period are no doubt due to his instigation and encouragement. He also turned his attention to the restoration and administration of several monasteries. In his repair of the Patriarchate buildings there is a conflict of information given by his biographers as to its extent and character, but it seems fairly certain that he limited his restoration to part of the Patriarchate house. During his first tenure of office the Corporation of Furriers brought the water supply into the Patriarchate and repaired all the fountains. It appears that the building and restoring of churches was often met with opposition from those who should have helped him most, as well as meanness in finding money for these purposes.

His political activities are complex and somewhat confused. At one time we find him censuring France and endeavouring by means of encyclicals and threats to keep the youth from being influenced by the new ideas of political liberty and the freedom of the individual: at another, favouring France and advising his flock to beware of the propaganda of the imperial governments of Great Britain and Russia. He showed some caution however in his accusations of Orthodox Russia when she entered the Ottoman provinces near the Danube in 1802. This was no doubt due to feelings of sympathy naturally existing between peoples of the same Faith. But his complaints against the British were more plainly shown. When the British Fleet at about the same time sailed into Turkish waters as a protest against the Ottoman Empire's pro-French policy, Gregorius, obeying a government order, not only urged the Christian community to build fortifications, but he himself, followed by the clergy, helped on the work. On another occasion when the Governor of Jannina, Ali Pasha,

urged the Christians of the Peloponnese to revolt he opposed the movement and sent a representative to its dioceses advising abstention from action, and pointing out the advantages for the Christian population of living under the laws of the Ottoman government. The same cautious attitude is to be seen in the period following the death of Velestinlis. Fearing lest the beginnings of a rising of Christians should cause purposeless bloodshed, he ordered the Metropolitans to beware of circulating any proclamation among the Christians of their provinces at that time. On his third accession to the Patriarchal throne in an encyclical address to the bishops (January 1819), while insisting on loyalty to the dogmas of the Orthodox religion, he ordered at the same time complete submission and obedience to "the powerful and invincible Imperial Government," to which, said he, we are subject by the Will of God.

In March 1821 when the Greek Revolution began to gather momentum, Gregorius anathematized from the pulpit of the church its leaders, Michael Soutsos and Alexander Ypsilanti, for their disturbing of the peace of the Ottoman Empire. He cannot however be considered either a traitor or a coward. In his relations with the Ottoman government he aimed strictly at guarding his flock from any unreasonable and untimely activity that could result in purposeless bloodshed.

Certain anonymous proclamations appeared at this time. "The Fatherly Instruction" called on the Orthodox to beware of French revolutionary ideas, while shortly after appeared the "Brotherly Instruction" said to have been issued by Korais. This latter pointed out to the people the necessity and advantage of revolutionary movements. A further proclamation aimed against "the Fatherly Instruction" followed, praising the benefits of the French democratic system of government and, at the same time, censuring Russia and her Empress. This last was published by the Greek Agent of the French Republic in the East. Yet another proclamation appeared under the title of "a Philhenene's Reflections" inspired by the same ideas. These proclamations roused the Greek people in the East.

Had Gregorius anything to do with them?

The historian Makraios, who was not well disposed towards him, states in his *Ecclesiastical History* that "the Fatherly Instruction" was published by Gregorius, who had ordered that it should appear over the signature of Anthimus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, at that time seriously ill. When the latter recovered, he protested against the forgery of his signature. The accusation is certainly untrue. Gregorius is not likely to have committed an act bordering on forgery.

In spite of all his precautions, he came under suspicion. Accused of impetuosity, he was declared incapable of keeping the Christian population under the laws of the Sublime Porte and unworthy of the government's confidence. On December 19th, 1798, he was dethroned.

His second tenure of office lasted from October 1806 until September 1808, when he was dethroned by his rival Kallinicus. His aims during this period were a continuation of those of his first reign, but it is worth noting that he ordered at this time that a baptismal register be kept in each community of the Greek Orthodox Christians, with entries of the date of birth,

the child's parents' names, the date of the baptism, as well as the names of the sponsors and of the priest performing the mystery. The immediate purpose was to ascertain the spiritual affinity among the Christian people, with a view to carrying out the marriage laws. Later on Christians were entitled to ask for a copy of the official act to prove their nationality and religion. Apart from this, however, since the Ottoman government had no registers, the making of these records became important.

During his third reign which began in December 1818, it is worthy of note that Gregorius drew the attention of the clergy to the question of marriages. He forbade mixed marriages, not only between Christians and non-Christians, but even between Christians of different obedience. As this decision of his was made retrospective, he was able to satisfy the imams and Ottoman judges who prepared the marriage contracts. A certain degree of lukewarmness among the people and negligence on the part of the religious authorities is to be deduced from these prohibitions.

The Patriarch's philanthropic work was done during this third reign of his and was effected through a centralized system. He set up in the Patriarchate the "Charity Chest" which concentrated all community funds. The regulations provided that all the Orthodox should contribute to this according to their means. Even the Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia were called upon to pay a certain sum yearly. The charities were distributed officially four times a year. Certain sums were also set aside for releasing those who were in prison for debt.

The ecclesiastical life of Gregorius was completed by the witness of his death. Even as early as 1818, when he was spending a time of rest in the monasteries of Mount Athos, the newly-established "Friendly Society" sent the associate Pharmakis to explain its purposes to him. The aged Churchman listened with great attention to the preparations that were being made, but hesitated to join the Society officially, fearing lest the whole innocent population might be in danger were the plot to be discovered.

As soon as he resumed the throne, his first act was to advise the ecclesiastical authorities to keep loyal to the Ottoman government. When the Revolution in Greece was actually declared, we see Gregorius excommunicating those who took part in it. When the preparations for its outbreak had reached their climax the means of escape and protection were offered him, but he refused saying, "The good shepherd will stay with his sheep," and advised the revolutionary leaders to be "wise." He did not cease however to work on behalf of the revolutionists. Whenever the need arose for receiving or transmitting information, he entered into correspondence with the appropriate persons, using the peaceful needs of the community as the figurative themes of his letters.

In spite of these precautions the Patriarch was found guilty by the Ottoman government. He was arrested and hanged at the entrance of the Patriarchate on Easter Sunday, the 10th of April, 1821. At the same time three other bishops were hanged at different places in the city: Dionysius Kalliarchis of Ephesus, Athanasius of Nicomedia and Eugenius of Anchialos. The body of Gregorius was dragged contemptuously through the streets of the suburbs and finally thrown into the sea. On April 13th

it was found in the Golden Horn by a certain captain Sklavos and taken to Odessa, where it received a splendid funeral by the order of Tsar Alexander I, and was buried in the Greek church of the Holy Trinity. Fifty years later, in 1871, the sacred relics were brought to Athens and placed in the Chapel of St. Eleutherius in the Cathedral. The Greek people, in grateful tribute to his memory, erected a statue of the Patriarch at the entrance of the University of Athens, opposite that of Velestinlis, while another was put up in his native town of Demetsana. In 1921 Gregorius was given his place in the company of the saints. In his ikons he is depicted as thin and of modest stature.

The philosophical thought of to-day refuses to accept the concept of fate and considers chance to be the result of the disposition and acts of the individual. Bearing in mind the nexus of historical events that give rise to a civilization, we are bound to admit that an enlightened inward power guides the psychological and intellectual world. The moral value of the individual is determined by the way in which he faces facts and understands his obligations towards the whole of which he is a part. From this point of view Gregorius is a personality who would have been highly distinguished in any period or civilization.

## THE EASTERN CHURCH IN THE WESTERN WORLD

*by* E. A. Papastephanou, S.T.M.

[The writer of this article is a deacon at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in New York. We publish it as a foretaste of what in a positive way may be expected from now on as the result of the impact of Eastern Orthodoxy on American Christianity.]

THE Orthodox and Greek Church has generally been identified with that section of Christendom historically found in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. True, it is Eastern because it originally constituted the Eastern part of the Undivided Church within the bounds of the Roman Empire and for long was confined to that part of the world. It would be wrong, however, to believe that her sphere of activity cannot or will not ever extend beyond the limits fixed by her history. She calls herself the Eastern Church and delights to be known as such, not because she considers herself only part of the Universal Church nor because she can never hope for a more universal field of activity, but rather because she prides herself in having clung tenaciously to the treasures of Christian antiquity which was centred in the East, the fountainhead of light and truth, as over against the West which has forgotten or changed much of that heritage.

It is not negligible that in the present century the westward direction of Eastern Orthodox strength presents a most unique phenomenon in the modern Christian world. Indeed, millions of Orthodox Christians are to be found in the Western world, particularly in America. Yet, we are not sufficiently aware of this imposing fact and of the reality that their Churches are spread throughout the United States. The full significance of Orthodoxy's close contact with the Western Christian world has yet to be grasped. Indeed, the Eastern Church is not simply contacting it—she is moving and

taking permanent root in the very midst of the Western world. Yet, we are hardly alive to the stimulating realities involved in this her first appearance in the West. We have not recognized the import of the implications of this remarkable happening.

It is not far from the truth to say that the greatest tragedy that befell Christendom was the isolation of the Greek and Eastern Church from the Western world. The ecclesiastical and political controversies which descend from the eleventh century in the West have thrust the Christian East into obscurity, not to say, oblivion. The formidable Moslem might further have isolated the Eastern Church and increased the chances of a religious upheaval in the West. At the time of the Reformation the general impression prevailing in the West was that the Eastern Church had not survived the Moslem onslaught and that no Christian existed in the Ottoman Empire. To be sure, however, the Eastern Church existed, and even Luther himself was one of the few who were aware of it. In fact, his allusions to Eastern Orthodoxy afford a most interesting study and a new insight into the consideration of the Reformation.

Though Orthodoxy's isolation was a tragedy, yet in a deep sense it was a blessing, for she was spared the effects and subsequent trends arising from the Reformation. She was saved from the consolidation of the decrees of Trent and from the endless subdivisions of Augsburg and Geneva. As one Western historian puts it, "We may gratefully remember that there is a theology in the world of which the free, genial mind of Chrysostom is still the golden mouthpiece; a theology in which scholastic philosophy has absolutely no part; in which the authority alike of Duns Scotus and of Calvin is unknown." Rarely, however, is the theologian adequately appreciative of the suggestive truth that the Reformation did not involve the whole of Christendom. The usual case is that he will view Christian thought through Reformation-coloured spectacles. Inevitably, the Reformation is the point of departure in his thinking. We cannot honestly deny that the theologian's whole historical prospective is warped when Eastern Christian thought is ignored.

When Luther nailed up his theses, the plight of the Orthodox Church under Moslem domination did not permit her to turn westward. She was in no position to bear witness to her message, let alone actively intervene and arbitrate, as it were, being a third unassociated party. But what Orthodoxy was impotent to do in the sixteenth century, she could do and, perhaps, will do now when isolation no longer thwarts her witness and inasmuch as the name "Eastern" now signifies her origin and not necessarily her locality.

There is every reason to believe that the Orthodox Church in the twentieth century is called upon to play, once again, an important part in Christendom as she did in the early period of the Church. In view of her dissociation from the Reformation, it becomes obvious that she is destined to assume a unique role in the Ecumenical Movement and, generally, in endeavours for Church unity. Free from the passionateness of the Reformation, she deserves to be given special attention and consideration in inter-Church efforts. In none of her Offices is the prayer "for the union of all"

omitted. Of course, one point must be made clear. She uncompromisingly condemns dogmas which are alien to her deposit. But this she does also: she advocates charity to those who hold them just as resolutely and passionately. It is not with arrogance and bigotry and self-righteousness that she holds to and cherishes her deep conviction that she is the sole, legitimate heir of the Early Church, but, rather with a profound sense of humility and responsibility for the vocation she has claimed, indeed, with full consciousness of her failure to meet its requirements fully.

It is not at all improbable that America some day will turn out to be the scene of the working of the impact of the Orthodox Church upon Protestantism. It might be hoped that Protestants will be prepared to abandon their intransigence of spirit and recognize the rich things which the tradition of Orthodoxy has to give. But a common understanding between Orthodoxy and Protestantism is not entirely necessary to the former's effective fulfilment of its mission. Indeed, already several of those who have become weary of the constant flux and chaos of Protestantism, and those who have discovered the lack of truth in Papal claims are turning to the Church which is neither Roman nor Protestant, and which does not constitute a compromise or mean between the two, but is an entirely new Church and yet the oldest, which appears to satisfy the longing for a natural, spontaneous Christianity.

It would not be wholly fanciful to say that the day is approaching when the Roman Church will be challenged by a growing Orthodox Church in America. 1453 has for long been deceiving Rome which since has thought of the Eastern Church as of small account, not to say, doomed to extinction. It is not beyond imagination, however, to believe that one day she will be taken by surprise. It should be remembered that Rome fears Eastern Orthodoxy more than she fears Protestantism. The reasons for this are really not difficult to grasp. Rome was unable to mislead the Eastern Church as she did the Western Church, for the Greeks were only too familiar with the views of the ancient Church. It is for this reason that the Greek Church has been called the Church of the Fathers. She stands as a living witness to the faith and practice of the Undivided Church from which Rome departed. While Rome reckons the East as schismatic, Romanism to Orthodoxy is sheer heresy and completely excluded from the Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Nicene Creed. More than once has she rebaptized converts from Rome. There is, consequently, much reason for believing that only the Orthodox Greek Church can cope effectively with the ascendancy of Romanism in America. To overlook this would be to miss one of the important lessons of the history of the Early Church.

Occasionally there have been Protestants who talk about the need of a Reformation in Orthodoxy. Some have felt that it is an inevitable happening and that in the process of time it is bound to come. Such hopes, however, felt since the sixteenth century have yet to be realized. But surely to speak of a possible Reformation in Orthodoxy along Protestant lines either indicates wishful thinking or betrays a gross ignorance of her internal spirit, mind, and mode of government. If there was ever to be a Reformation in Orthodoxy, it would have occurred long since. It would have taken

place, if not in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the Calvinists and Lutherans unfurled the banner of the Reformation in the Bosphorus, certainly in the early nineteenth century, at the time when Turkish control was thrown off and Western culture with its legacy of the Reformation and of Rationalism completely re-educated the Greek nation and all the Balkans and thoroughly penetrated all aspects of life. It is a most revealing fact that Orthodoxy survived the crisis of the nineteenth century. It is an impressive truth that she had passed the supreme test. Recent spiritual movements on a large scale in Greek Orthodoxy is the clearest sign of her victory over the opposing forces in her new culture. She has proved that there exists a deep reason why the Church has never had a Reformation.

To be sure, the Orthodox Churches have never felt the necessity of what may be called a return to original Christianity. They are what they were. They were never Roman and they have not become Protestant. In this connection the late theologian Androutsos writes that "the imposing countenance of Orthodoxy throughout the ages, so becoming to her antiquity, lies in the ideal combination of authority and freedom." Certainly this was a fundamental defect in the Roman Church and largely responsible for creating abuses leading to the Reformation. Along similar lines Professor Zankov writes that "The whole essence of its (Orthodoxy's) being from the first until now, has been the synthesis, the inward union of these two basic principles of authority and freedom."

The Orthodox would say that his Church never will need Protestantism in order to keep "healthy," to use a term employed in some quarters where Catholicism is tempered, so to speak, with Protestantism. Orthodoxy, it would be said, no more needs Protestantism or Romanism than the Early Church would have needed either. It is, therefore, not unprofitable to see how the Orthodox Church, which had no part in the Reformation, evaluates that religious upheaval. Professor Bratsiotis in his *Authority and Freedom in Orthodox Theology* aptly expresses the Eastern Church's estimation in stating that "Opposition to Papal despotism pushed the religious revolt into unbridled freedom, high-handedness, the rule of the individual and subjectivism. Protestantism became a redaction of Papalism —a transformed Papalism, or to use a popular expression, essentially 'the reverse side of the coin,' authority and despotism of one succeeded by the authority and despotism of many and of each individual. In Protestantism the authority of conscience in the individual essentially inherited ecclesiastical authority. Everything is the individual, the personality. It is obvious that Protestantism does not constitute a regular and normal condition and state of affairs, since, like Papalism, wherefrom it took its being, it is an extreme—a monstrosity."

However disagreeable these words may be, it would be a mistake to slight the Eastern impression of the Reformation and to dismiss it without giving it some thought. There are some Protestants who are unaware of the existence of the Orthodox Church, but there are far more Protestants who, although they know her, fear to face the challenge of the imposing verities about that Church. It is characteristic of Protestants to prefer to restrict their thinking and inquiry to issues bearing upon Western Christian

tradition which in the end might justify the events of the sixteenth century. To consider the Eastern and Greek Church thoroughly and objectively might open new horizons of thought and, thereby, perhaps, endanger the righteousness of the Protestant position. It would possibly cast new light on Christian dogma and shake self-sufficiency and self-complacency. Such is the narrowed and prejudiced outlook of Protestantism in general. But, certainly it does not become the dignity of the Protestant mind, which since the Reformation has been preoccupied in an earnest search for the restoration of Truth.

There is no escaping from the reality that Protestantism in America will sooner or later be compelled to face the challenge of the Orthodox and Greek Church, which even Luther acknowledged "produced the most excellent writers and so many holy men celebrated throughout the Universal Church." It will be faced with a growing Church which, though having no single, visible, infallible authority, yet preserves unchanged down the ages the legacy of the Doctors and Fathers of the Early Church, and maintains a unity in faith and practice which baffles rational explanation. To ignore Greek theology would be tantamount to disregarding a fresh insight into the study of the Church as an ongoing concern. It would be to discredit the very *raison d'être* of Protestantism. To sum it all up in the words of a modern English historian, "A knowledge of Eastern theology has become for us a duty, not a luxury."

## THE CHRISTMAS KONTAKION OF ST. ROMANUS THE MELODIST

TOWARDS the end of the reign of Anastasius I (A.D. 491–518) Romanus, a Syrian Jew from Homs, was ordained deacon at Beirût, then came to Constantinople, where he served in the Church of the God-Bearer ἐν τοῖς Κύρου. Here at Christmas-time the Holy God-Bearer appeared to him in a dream, giving him a book and telling him to swallow it. He obeyed, and immediately awoke, mounted the ambon of the church, and began to sing the long poem which I have here translated. It was the first of a flood of Kontakia, reputed to have numbered more than a thousand. Eighty-five (including some of doubtful genuineness) are known to survive, though not all have been edited. The Syrian ancestry of this type of poetry is obvious to any one who has studied the Syriac hymns of St. Ephraim. Imported to Constantinople, it remained the dominant form of the longer works of ecclesiastical poetry until it was ousted in the ninth century by the more monastic pattern of the "Canon." The only example of a "Kontakion" still in liturgical use in its entirety to-day is the great "Akathist Hymn" to the Mother of God (a second Akathist, copied from this, and addressed to the Precious Cross, is to be found in the Greek Horologion). Otherwise the Kontakia are only represented to-day by their opening verse and first stanza, after the sixth Ode of the Canon. But the Christmas Kontakion—the first and most famous of Romanus' works—continued to be sung complete at the Christmas banquet in the Imperial Palace at Constantinople as late as the twelfth century.

The following translation is far from perfect. But I publish it in the hope that it may suggest possibilities, with Byzantine poetry, in the way of rhythmical translation keeping close to the original, as against either verse paraphrases like those of J. M. Neale, or prose translations. I have not attempted to reproduce the exact rhythm of the original—a stress rhythm repeated with precise correspondence from stanza to stanza—but have tried to suggest its character in the rather looser form which seems more suited to English poetry. And, while aiming at poetry rather than scholarship, I have taken very few liberties with the text.

It seemed right to give the poem complete, as its balanced composition is one of its marked features. At the same time, the length of the poem is determined rather artificially by the fact that the initials of the stanzas in the Greek form an acrostic (in this case "The hymn of the lowly Romanus")—and towards the end one begins, as a result, to feel perhaps a suspicion of 'padding.' It would not be right, in translation, to hide either this, or a certain *naïveté*, or practicality, which occasionally shows itself in contrast to the general lofty tone of the hymn.

D.J.C.

To-day the Virgin
  The Above-Being beareth,
And the Earth the Cave
  To the Unapproachable bringeth.
Angels with Shepherds
  Are singing "Glory":
And Wise-men with a Star
  Are coming a journey.
For to us is given
  A Child new-born,
    God before all worlds began.

1.

Bethlehem has opened Eden:
  Come and behold.
We have found Delight hidden:
  Come and receive
Things that are of Paradise
  Within the Cave.
There appeareth
  A root unwatered,
    Whence springs forgiveness.
There is found
  A well undug,
Whence David of old
  Desired to drink.
There a Virgin
  Bearing a Baby
Quenched at once the thirst
  Of Adam and of David.
Thitherward for this
  Let us hasten, where is found
    A Child new-born,
      God before all worlds began.

2.

The Father of the Mother willed
  To become her Son.
The Saviour of the babies lay
  A Babe in a Crib.
And the girl that gave Him birth
  Looked on Him and said:
"Child, O tell me,
  How wast thou sown in me,
    And how art thou grown in me?
I see thee, flesh of mine,
  And am amazed,
That I have milk for thee,
  And am unwed.
I watch thee lying
  Wrapped in thy swaddling-clothes,
Then think on my maidenhead's
  Seal still unbroken.
This thou didst preserve
  When thou chosest to become
    A Child new-born,
      God before all worlds began.

3.

"Lofty King, with poverty
What hast thou to do?
Maker of the heavens, why
Art thou come to earth?
With a cave wast thou in love?
Delighting in a crib?
Behold, there is
No room in the inn
Found for thy handmaid.
No room? But no,
Not even a cave:
For this itself
Belongs to another.
And to Sarah
Bearing a baby
Much land was given for portion:
Not a hole* to me.
Borrowed was the grot
Where thou dwellest by thy will,
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

4.

She in secret uttering
Such words as these,
With entreaty to the Knower
Of things unseen,
Heareth now the Wise-men
Seeking the Babe.
And straight to these,
"What men are ye?"
The Maiden cried.
But they to her,
"Thou, who art thou,
That thou hast brought forth
Such a Child as this?
Who was thy father?
What woman gave thee birth,
To be mother and nurse
Of a Son without father?
When we saw His star,
We knew there had appeared
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

5.

"For exactly unto us
Balaam entrusted
The meaning of the oracles
Of his sooth-saying,
Saying that the time would come
When a star should dawn,
A star to quench
All soothsayings
And all auguries;
A star resolving
The sages' fables,
And all their proverbs,
And all their riddles;
A star than the star
That to sight appeareth
Far more exceeding bright,
Of all stars the creator;
Of whom the Scripture saith
'Out of Jacob He shall dawn,'
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

6.

Sayings steeped in miracle
As Mary heard
She bowed down and worshipped
The fruit of her womb,
And she wept, and said, "My Child,
Great things to me,
Great are all
That thou hast done,
With my poverty.
For lo, there are Wise-men
Without, that seek thee,
They who are kings
Of Orient lands.
They now are seeking
Thy countenance,
And begging to behold it,
The rich of thy people.
For thy people truly
Are these, to whom thou art known
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

7.

"Since it is thy people, then,
O my Child, command
That they come beneath thy roof,
That they may see
Riches in penury,
Precious poverty.
No need for shame
When for glory and boast
I have thee.
Thou art the grace
And the comeliness
Of the dwelling and of me.
Bid them then come in.
Nought care I
For the simple show,
When I hold thee for treasure
Whom kings are come to see,
Since kings and Wise-men
Know in deed thou art appeared
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

* The word is that used in Mt. viii. 20, "Foxes have holes."

8.

Jesus the Christ, and in
Very deed our God,
Touching in ways unseen
His mother's heart
Saith, "Bring them in, whom I
Brought with my word.
For my word
Has shined upon these
Who are come to seek me.
A star it is
To the bodily sight:
But a power it is
To the mind's eye.
With the Wise-men
It came to serve me:
And still it stands
Performing its ministry,
Pointing with its rays
To the spot where lies
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

9.

"Now receive them, August Lady,
Who receive me.
For in them I am, as I
Am in thy arms.
And I left not thee, and yet
With them I came."
She then opens
The doors, and welcomes
The Wise-men's company.
She opens the doors,
The unopenable
Gate, which Christ
Alone passed through.
She opens the doors,
And is unopened;
And nought is stolen
Of her treasure of chastity.
She hath opened the doors,
Of whom the Door is†
The Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

10.

Then the Wise-men to the chamber
Hastened straightway,
And beheld the Christ, and
Trembled to see
The Child's Mother,
And the Mother's spouse;
And said in fear,
"This is a Son
Without descent.
And how, O Virgin,
Do we still see
Him who espoused thee
Within thy house?
No blemish lay
On thy child-bearing.
Let not Joseph's presence
Bring blame on thy dwelling.
Many hast thou envious
Seeking where to find
The Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

11.

Mary to the Wise-men saith,
"I put you in mind
What the cause for which I keep
Joseph in my house.
'Tis for refutation of
All slanderers.
Himself will say
What he has heard
Concerning my Child.
In sleep he saw
A holy angel
Telling to him
Whence I conceived.
A fiery vision
To his thorny mind
Brought assurance in the night
Concerning his grief.
For this cause I have with me
Joseph to declare
The Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

12.

"He sets forth the story
Of all that he has heard
He reports distinctly
What he himself has seen—
Stories of the heavenlies
And of things of earth:
Of the Shepherds,
How fiery beings
Made song with men of clay:
Of you the Wise-men,
How there went before you
A star to light you
And be your guide.
Therefore, leaving
Things told already,
Tell us the whole tale
Of what now has happed with you
—Whence ye came, and how
Ye knew there was appeared
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

† St. John x. 7.

13.

As she spake these words to them,
The shining maid,
Unto her the lamps
Of the Orient said,
"Wouldest thou learn from whence
Hither we came?
From Chaldæan land,
Where they do not say,
'The Lord is God of gods':
From Babylon,
Where they do not know
Who is the maker
Of the light they worship.
There came, and took us
Away from thence,
Out of the Persian fire,
The spark of thy Child.
Fire devouring we have left,
Fire like freshening dew behold,
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

14.

"Vanity of vanities
All things are.
But among us none is found
Understanding this.
For some mislead, and
Some are misled.
Therefore, O Virgin,
Thanks be to thy Offspring,
By whom we have redemption
Not from error only,
But from the affliction
Of all the countries
Through which we passed,
Godless nations,
And tongues unknown,
As we went about the earth,
Searching it out,
Ever with the star for lamp,
Seeking where to find,
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

15.

"But, as we were holding still
This same star for lamp,
All Jerusalem
We journeyed about,
Fulfilling, as was like,
The prophecy.
For we had heard
That God had threatened
To search it with lamps.†
And with a lamp
We went about it,
Desiring to find
A great ordinance.
But we found it not:
For taken away
Was her Ark, and the fair things
That of old it contained.
The old things are passed away:
He hath made all things new,
The Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

16.

"Yea," to the faithful Wise-men
Mary then said:
"All Jerusalem
Did ye journey about?
That city,
The prophet-slayer?
And how unscathed
Did ye pass through it,
That to all is hostile?
And how escaped ye
The eye of Herod,
Him who knows no rule,
Breathing murders?"
And they unto her
Speak thus: "O Virgin,
We escaped not his eye,
But we played with him.
We with all had converse,
Enquiring where to find
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

17.

When the God-Bearer had heard
These words from them,
Then spake she to them, "How
Did they question you,
Herod the king, and
The Pharisees?"
"Herod first;
Then, as thou saidst,
The chiefs of thy nation
Made from us
Of the time of this star
Which now appeareth
Exact enquiry:
And, taking knowledge,
As if they had not learnt,
They had no desire to see
Him they had searched to learn;
Since it behoves
The searchers to contemplate
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

† Zeph. i. 12.

18.

"They in their senselessness
Supposed us mad.
And they were asking us,
'Whence came ye, and when?
How did ye journey
By paths that appear not?'
And we in answer
Asked them questions
Of what they had known:
'You, of old time,
How did you journey
Through that great wilderness
Through which ye passed?
He who guided
Those who came out of Egypt
Now has guided us
From Chaldæa to Himself,
With a fiery pillar then,
With a star now to reveal
The Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

19.

"'The star was everywhere
Going before us,
As before you Moses went
Bearing his rod,
Haloed with the light of
His God-knowledge.
You on the manna
Fed of old,
And drank from the rock.
But we were filled
With the hope of Him,
Looking to be fed
With the joy of Him.
Not to Persia
To trace back our steps,
For our journey's pathlessness,
Had we in mind,
Longing to contemplate,
To worship and to glorify
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.'"

20.

Thus were the unerring Wise-men
Telling their tale,
While the August Lady set
Her seal to all,
And the Babe's authority
On both was set.
He made her womb
After Child-bearing
Still undefiled.
He showed their mind
After their coming
Still unwearied,
And their steps likewise.
For none of these
Was worn with the journey,
As, coming to Daniel,
Habakkuk was not wearied.
For the same to the Prophets
Appeared, and to the Wise-men,
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

21.

When they had ended all
This their story,
Gifts the Wise-men on their hands
Lifted, and worshipped
The Gift of gifts,
The Ointment of ointments.
Gold and myrrh then,
And frankincense,
Unto Christ they offered,
Crying, "Accept
A gift in three substances,
As from the Seraphim
The hymn thrice-Holy.
Turn them not away
Like the gifts of Cain,
But receive them in thine arms
Like Abel's oblation,
By her that gave thee birth,
Through whom thou art to us
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

The Immaculate beholding
New things now and bright;
Wise-men bringing in their hands
Gifts, and worshipping,
And a star revealing, and
Shepherds making hymn,
To the Creator
And Lord of all these,
Makes her entreaty,
"Trinity of gifts,
My Child, receiving,

22.

Three requests grant
To her that bore thee.
For airs in season
I pray to thee,
And for the fruits of Earth,
And those that dwell therein.
To all be reconciled
By me, of whom thou art
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

23.

"For I am not just thy Mother,
Merciful Saviour,
Nor purposeless have milk
For the Milk-Bestower.
But for all men unto thee
I make entreaty.
Thou hast made me
Of all my race
The mouth and the boast.
For thy world of men
Has in me
A mighty covering,
A wall and a buttress.
They look upon me
Who were cast out
From thy Paradise of old:
For I bring them back
To have sense of all things
By me, of whom thou art
A Child new-born,
God before all worlds began.

24.

"Save the world, O Saviour—
For this cause art thou come.
Stablish all thy purpose—
For this cause hast thou shined
On me, and on the Wise-men,
And on all Creation.
For lo, the Wise-men,
To whom thou revealedst
The light of thy countenance,
Falling before thee,
Offer thee gifts
Fair and useful
And greatly sought after.
I have need of them:
For I am about
Unto Egypt to hie,
Fleeing with thee for thy sake,
O my Guide, my Son,
My Maker, my Redeemer,
Child new-born,
God before all worlds began."

# THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

THREE LECTURES BY E. EVERY

## I

### INTRODUCTION

ORTHODOXY is a confusing word. Perhaps in English more than in other languages it tends to convey the impression of conservatism in the bad sense. There are those who pray, "Keep me from growing Orthodox." On the other hand, where it is used in a good sense, it may mean various different things. There are Orthodox Jews and Orthodox Marxists and, in theological circles, for some curious reason, the term "Neo-Orthodoxy" has come to signify the teaching of the disciples of Professor Karl Barth.

Here, I am using the adjective Orthodox and the noun Orthodoxy solely with reference to the Church in communion with Constantinople and to its tenets and beliefs. But I ought to say how the theologians of the Orthodox Church understand the idea of being Orthodox. The word Orthodox is derived from two Greek words, ὀρθὸς, meaning right or upright, and δόξα, which generally, in the classics, has the sense of "opinion," but which in the Christian Fathers and in the prayers and hymns of the Christian Church means also "glory" or even "praise." Both in Old Slavonic and in Syriac, the Greek word, δόξα, is translated by a word of which the original pre-christian sense seems to be "glory" rather than "opinion." It is at least possible that to be Orthodox is to worship rightly or to praise God in the right way, before it is to have the right opinions. Certainly to be Orthodox does not mean to have the right opinions about all kinds of questions in the world. It is not in accordance with the spirit of the Orthodox Church to think that there is, or should be, and must be, an Orthodox

line of thought about every subject or an Orthodox answer to every kind of question. Orthodoxy is thinking rightly in order to glorify rightly. The object of this glory and the subject of this thinking is the Living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the God of the Hebrews and of the Christians, the God of revelation.

It will probably seem to a great many that the theology of which I am going to speak to-day is a complete anachronism, in that it does not take into consideration either the results of biblical criticism or the results of the modern outlook concerning the structure and origins of the material world and of mankind. It is true that, for many different reasons, the theologians of the Orthodox Church have not as yet reached any conclusions that can be called their own, or adopted any general line, on such questions as evolution and biblical criticism, although there are individuals among them who have studied these questions. In these lectures I have left the questions which we call "questions of modern thought" somewhat severely alone. For Orthodox thought about these questions, although it is going on at a rather tentative stage, is not easily summarized and could very easily be misrepresented.

I want to remind you that there is a sense in which the Orthodox Christian doctrines are prayers and praises before they are propositions in philosophy or in history. They represent the relationship in prayer between the praying believer or body of believers and the God of revelation. For example, the Fathers and the Councils were most insistent on the idea that Christ has Two Natures and Two Wills, not only during His human life but also now, after His Ascension. His Godhead and His Humanity are not confused or mixed. The underlying purpose of this insistence was to warn and guard the Church against the kind of false mysticism which suggests that the member of the body of Christ is to aim at actually becoming God. We are being made partakers of the divine nature; the Greek Fathers were not afraid of speaking of our deification. But our deification is that we become more and more completely assimilated to the humanity of Christ, and the humanity of Christ is always distinct, though inseparable, from the deity of Christ. That was the background of the emphasis placed upon the physical rising again and physical ascension of the body of Christ; the victory of Christ and of the Christian was not absorption into a mystic "one" in which all distinctions are lost as in oriental pantheism. Moreover, it includes the completion and the fulfilment of our physical and bodily life. That Christ in heaven is still the kind of person of whom a picture can be made is a warning to all those who want to identify the spiritual with the wholly abstract. As for the Virgin Birth of our Lord, it often seems to me remarkable that we in our Church have, to such a great extent, retained belief in it, without thinking about its meaning. As a matter of pure and simple history it is not, of course, either proved or disproved by the evidence. The most one can say, as an historian, is that it is a story which Christians in general have believed since the later years of the first century. But it signifies a whole aspect of the nature of prayer and communion with God that "they who hear and keep the word of God," those who "do the

will of the heavenly Father," and "keep and ponder in their hearts" the signs and wonders, are magnified to be the Mother of the Lord. By this I do not for one moment mean that the Virgin Birth did not really happen. I am personally sure that it did happen. It seems to me perfectly comprehensible that it should have been a secret. But no one can prove that, as a matter of history. As the story is told, in St. Luke particularly, it is the meeting of the remnant of Israel with the challenge of God becoming man, and the response of the remnant. This is represented in every prayer and every sacrament. Christ is formed in us and becomes ours through the obedience of the human free will. By all means let us have a perfectly free discussion of questions of historical evidence. The Church has nothing to fear from that. But let it not be supposed that we can dismiss doctrines without considering the kind of religion which they represent.

## The Synodical Conception of Visible Unity

*Ecclesiology is the doctrine of liturgical worship*

The Church in a diocese or bishopric is an organism. It would be seen more completely as organic if the diocese consisted, as it did in primitive times, of a worshipping congregation, in which the bishop celebrated the Eucharist, surrounded by the body of the presbyters, and assisted by the deacons and the people. In that celebration of the Eucharist the whole Church is organically united. The whole Church is present in every Eucharist. This is the starting-point of the conception which I have to describe. For practical reasons, probably from the very first generation of Church history, the bishop is not always the president at every Eucharist. But the diocese is an organism, visibly uniting a number of congregations under the authority of the bishop, their principal pastor and minister. It is important that, according to Orthodox canon law, there can be only one bishop in any place who is the bishop of the place; he is not the bishop of a national group in the place or the bishop of a "denomination." He is, from the Orthodox standpoint, the only lawful bishop of all the Christian people in the limits of his diocese, which are limits traced on the map, territorial or local limits.

In Greece, for example, all the Russian parishes are under the authority of the Greek bishops of the places where they are. The Greek and Serbian parishes in Russia are under the authority of the Russian bishops. That is the normal arrangement. There is one Orthodox bishop of the place for all the Orthodox. Although he cannot be physically present at every liturgy, he is mentioned by name, as the bishop, in the prayers of every celebration of the liturgy, and every sacrament is ministered under his authority.

All the evidence goes to show that, before the separation of East and West, Italian and other parishes in Constantinople using the Latin language in their services and employing either the liturgy of Rome or a very similar liturgy were under the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople as the bishop of the place. Similarly monasteries of Greek and other Eastern monks in and near Rome, and Eastern clergy visiting Rome, were under the authority of the Pope, although using Eastern prayers in the Holy Eucharist.

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Moreover, the relationship between Easterns and Westerns before the separation was in an important respect unlike the relationship between Uniats and Latins in the modern Roman Communion. The Easterns, when visiting Rome, normally could and did take part in the Roman liturgy, communicating, as bishops and priests, at the Papal Mass. The Romans, when visiting Constantinople, participated in the Byzantine liturgy, "con-celebrating," as bishops and priests, with the Patriarch. A bishop or priest could and did celebrate in both rites. In the modern practice of the Roman Communion a priest is normally either of the Latin rite or of some Eastern rite, and wherever he goes he carries his rite with him. Moreover, where there is a community of Roman Catholics of the Latin rite in any part of the world, that community is under a bishop of the Latin rite.

Thus, in the Roman Communion, there is a Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem ruling over the Latins of Palestine, and there is a Latin Archbishop of Athens, with other Latin bishops, ruling over the Latins of Greece. The Latins of Egypt and Syria are ruled by Vicars-Apostolic, but there is a Latin Patriarch of Antioch in the Vatican. Parallel with this episcopate of the Latin rite over the Eastern regions, there are episcopates of the various Eastern rites within the Roman Communion. The link which holds them together is the Papal authority to which all are subject. In practice the Latin priest seldom communicates except as the celebrant of his own Mass. The Latin laity do not often communicate at Uniat liturgies. Nor do the Uniats communicate at the Roman liturgy. This is the perfectly natural result of the way in which liturgical practice has grown in the West. In modern times any Eastern Orthodox bishop on a visit to the diocese of another Eastern Orthodox bishop is likely to be invited to "co-liturgize" with the bishop of the diocese, even if they are of different nationalities and use different liturgical languages. (The Eucharist is then celebrated in both languages.) It is a common practice in the East for a bishop and several priests to "con-celebrate" in the same celebration of the Eucharist. This is the normal outward sign of visible unity.

A sign of unity closely connected with this is the "mention of names" in the prayers of the Eucharist. Every priest mentions his bishop. Every bishop mentions his Metropolitan and every Metropolitan mentions his Patriarch or the Archbishop presiding in his Autocephalous Church. The Patriarchs and the Archbishops presiding over Autocephalous Churches mention, in the same way, "every bishopric of the Orthodox." This means that when the Patriarch of Constantinople celebrates the Eucharist, at the point in the prayers at which bishops and priests mention the names of their superiors in the hierarchy, the Patriarch prays "for every bishopric of the Orthodox, of those who rightly divide the word of truth," and the deacon of the Patriarchal Church subsequently calls the people to pray for long life for the Patriarch who is celebrating and for the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Moscow, Belgrade, and Bucharest, as well as the Archbishops presiding over the Autocephalous Churches of Cyprus, Greece, Georgia, Poland, Albania, and Bulgaria. Each of these is mentioned by his Christian name and by his official title. According to the Orthodox theory, this indicates that the Patriarchate of Constantinople

recognizes these other Patriarchates and Autocephalous Churches as sister-churches, holding the same Orthodox doctrine, and recognizes the Patriarch and Archbishops named as the canonical holders of their sees. The same kind of ceremonial recognition is given in the liturgy at Athens, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Damascus (Damascus is the *de facto* seat of the Patriarch and see of Antioch). There is every reason to believe that it happens also at Moscow, Belgrade, and Bucharest. It indicates that, at least officially, the Greek Patriarchs and the Russian and Serbian and Rumanian Patriarchs mutually recognize the Orthodoxy and canonical regularity of one another and would be ready, if they could meet, to "con-celebrate." The custom seems to be very ancient, and one sign of the breach between East and West was the omission of the name of the Pope of Rome from the list of names so recited in the Eastern Churches. It is important to recall that the Pope was "mentioned" in the Eastern Liturgy before the separation of East and West. He was then mentioned as one of several Patriarchs and Archbishops of important sister-churches. He was mentioned while he was regarded as holding the same doctrinal or dogmatic position as the Patriarchs of the East. He was omitted from the list of Orthodox Patriarchs when his letters to his fellow-bishops in the East on doctrine seemed to show him *not* to be in agreement with the Eastern Patriarchs, so that they could not state that he was in communion with them in matters of faith.

Any bishop in the Orthodox Church should canonically be consecrated by three bishops, and before he can be consecrated his election to his see must be canonically confirmed by a body of Orthodox bishops. In the service of the consecration of bishops the bishop-elect declares his faith to the bishops who consecrate him in a series of dogmatic statements starting with the Nicene Creed. It is still customary for Patriarchs and presiding Archbishops of Autocephalous Churches, when enthroned, to announce their enthronement to the sister-churches in "enthronement-letters" which declare their Orthodoxy. According to Orthodox canon law it is not merely permissible but even essential to separate from the communion of a bishop who, while claiming to be Orthodox, teaches heresy in his official capacity. A bishop suspected of heresy should be examined and tried by a court of twelve fellow-bishops. But if this is not done, provided that the false doctrine which the bishop teaches is identical with a heresy declared to be heresy by an Orthodox synod (or by the Fathers), the clergy of his diocese are commanded to cease to mention his name in the liturgy without waiting for a synodical trial. In this way they declare the see to be vacant. Bishops who were reconciled with Rome during the medieval period were often repudiated in this way by their clergy and people. (In recent years this procedure has sometimes been adopted as a form of protest by which clergy can induce an unworthy bishop to retire, even when it is difficult to say that he is actually a heretic. This is a use of the procedure open to criticism.) Every bishop is responsible to his fellow-bishops. Every local church is responsible to her sister-churches. Communion between them depends on the maintenance of an identical dogmatic faith. In principle, there is no reason why forms of worship should not differ, as long as the differences are not such that they make common worship out of the ques-

tion and exclude "con-celebration." The private opinions and guesses and speculations of the theologians may differ and indeed must differ in different regions. But the things which all baptized and communicant Christians have to promise to believe and to do should be the same everywhere. The essential conditions of ordination to the Church's ministry should likewise be the same everywhere in so far as they have to do with the common standard of belief and practice. Each Orthodox Church believes the other Orthodox Churches to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith and not to teach as necessary to salvation anything that is not so necessary. This is the general theory of the matter. In things necessary there must be unity and in things doubtful there must be liberty. Each diocese is an organic unity under a bishop. But the relationship between dioceses or between one Patriarchate or National Church and another Patriarchate or National Church is the relationship of identity in faith. It is not the relationship of one member to another member in an organization. The Eastern Orthodox Church on earth in this generation is not an organization, although it may be possible to say that each diocese is an organism and each Patriarchate is an organization. *The* community of communities or *organism* to which the dioceses belong is the One Church of all the ages rather than the Church on earth in the present generation. Identity of faith is regarded as existing between one generation and another in time as well as between one region and another in space. Here one has to remember the meaning of Orthodoxy. Different generations must give different answers to questions about science and even to certain questions about philosophy. But Christian doctrine is not an answer to questions about science or even history or metaphysics. It is an answer to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" and to the question, "What must we do to be saved?" There the answer is conceived by the Orthodox to be one unique answer in which they are united and can unite people of diverse ages, cultures and languages and types of mind. Heresy is not any sort of false opinion, but false opinion as to what we should think of Christ and as to what we should do to be saved.

When the Orthodox theologians discuss the question, "How can the Church be said to be infallible?" one of the historical examples to which an appeal is often made is the example of St. Maximus, one of the Fathers of the seventh century. He was a champion of the doctrine of the full humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ against the attempts of the Byzantine Emperors to bring about a false union between the Orthodox and the Monophysites, in the equivocal formula of the Two Natures and One Energy, which he regarded as being in substance Monophysite. At one period all the leaders of the Eastern Church were against him in this matter, with the exception of Sophronius of Jerusalem. But he had Rome and the West on his side after his visit to Rome. The Emperor of the East and the court bishops accused him of having induced the Westerns and the Pope of Rome to agree with him and to resist their programme of union. When he came back to Constantinople and refused to communicate with the Patriarch of Constantinople, treating the Patriarch as a heretic, Maximus was put into prison in a fortress near the Black Sea. There his jailors came to

him and told him that the Pope of Rome had sent ambassadors to Constantinople and had agreed to accept the Emperor's programme for the solution of the doctrinal question at issue. All the Patriarchates and all parts of the Church had accepted the Monothelite formula. He did not believe what he was told. He was pressed to say to which Church he would belong if East and West were really united against him. Could bishops from Rome and Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria and Jerusalem, and from all over the civilized world be unanimous unless they were right? "Where," they said, "is now your Church?" He replied sadly with words from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. Even if angels were to proclaim a Gospel different from the Gospel of the Incarnate Lord as perfect God and perfect man, he must say anathema to the angels. He would certainly say it to the Romans, if necessary, although he did not believe that the Bishop of Rome, whom he knew personally, had deserted the good cause. According to one version of the story he added that he and his two prison-companions were "The Church of Christ." He and they were not bishops. It is not certain that he was in priests' orders. He was a monk and no more. No doubt there were some bishops on his side, and he believed that there always would be some bishops, as well as some priests and deacons and monks and laity, on the side of Orthodoxy. But he considered that the Orthodox could be a small remnant. This type of situation has been seen at other periods in the history of the Orthodox Church from the fourth century to the fifteenth century.

There is another story which is very relevant to this point, although it can easily be misunderstood. There was in the fifth century an abbot in the desert named Agathon. One day some of his disciples arranged for him to be tested by strangers in order to see whether he would lose his temper. The strangers asked him whether he was Agathon the liar, whether he was Agathon the thief, and whether he was Agathon the talkative person, and other similar questions. He replied to each question, "Yes, I am." He was then asked, "Are you Agathon the heretic?" He replied, quite as calmly, that a mistake had been made. He was not Agathon the heretic, but only Agathon the talkative liar and thief and adulterer and so on. He afterwards explained the reasons for his answers to his disciples. It is good for us to recognize that, in our hearts, we desire all kinds of evil, and we commit all kinds of evil acts. We are guilty of lust and envy and malice and lack of love. But it is not true that we wish to be heretics. We do not and cannot wish to be separated from God, not to know God, or to proclaim false ideas about God, for that would close up the way of penitence and forgiveness to us. If we are heretics we do not wish to be heretics or confess that we are heretics, for we regard our heresy as genuine Orthodoxy. We cannot therefore say "Yes" to the question, "Are you heretics?" although we may confess all kinds of sins. It is a mistake to treat this story as meaning that sin did not seem to matter compared with heresy. Sin did matter tremendously, and penitence and amendment of life were emphasized. But heresy is the "Lie in the soul," the lie that is believed to be true by the liar and cannot therefore be repented. As it cannot be repented it cannot be forgiven. It is the closing of the eyes to truth, and is spiritual

catastrophe for the heretic and for those under his influence. Heresy is not necessarily theoretical at all. There may be a heresy entirely about morality or about prayer. It is not a matter of theological speculation. The heretic proclaims his heretical opinion not as his private opinion but as the genuine doctrine of the Church, which he thus counterfeits. He puts another Gospel in the position of the Gospel. He charges the Orthodox Church with heresy. He insists on the acceptance of his doctrine on pain of anathema. He seeks to hide Christ with a false image of Christ. That is the way of conceiving the idea of heresy which seems to me to be important, if we are to understand the exclusiveness of the historic Church.

The whole West, before the time of the Reformation, regarded Eastern Christendom in general as schismatic and Eastern Orthodox theology as, more or less, heretical, in the measure of its divergence from the theology of the Western Church. The separated Eastern Churches and sects regarded the Orthodox Church as a heresy. The claim to Orthodoxy is, first of all, a plea of "Not guilty," entered in answer to these charges. It is saying, "We may be very corrupt and very unintelligent, but we are not heretics or schismatics, as we have been alleged to be." In that sense, each of the particular Orthodox Churches claims to be Orthodox in the proper sense of the term and recognizes the claim to be Orthodox of each of the other Orthodox Churches in full communion with it. The Orthodoxy of the Roman Catholics and the separated Eastern sects and communities is denied, in that they themselves deny the Orthodoxy of the Orthodox.

The communities which separated from Rome at the time of the Reformation are separated from the Eastern Orthodox as a matter of historical fact in consequence of events when they were still part of the Roman obedience. They may not regard the Eastern Orthodox as heretical, but it would not be true to say that they have ever made it clear that they do not regard the Eastern Church as corrupt in doctrine. Certainly the Lutherans and Calvinists treat the Orthodox Church of the East as a corrupted Church in respect of doctrine. The tendency of Liberal Protestantism has been to charge the Greek Fathers with the acute Hellenization of the Christian faith. The Nicene Creed of the Prayer Book of the Anglicans contains the Filioque clause, and this may mean that Eastern theologians who regard the Filioque clause as theologically unsound are regarded by the Anglicans as heretics. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church state that the Churches of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem have erred in matters of faith. I have known intelligent and sympathetic Orthodox who are quite convinced that as a matter of history this must mean that first of all the Eastern Churches fell into one heresy and then, later on, Rome fell into another heresy, *even as* the East had fallen at the separation of East and West, leaving the British Church alone in the possession of true Orthodoxy. They do not suppose that we all now believe that. They are aware of varieties in the interpretation of the Articles. But they consider that to be the most plausible literal sense of the nineteenth Article. There are quite a number of other Articles among the Thirty-nine Articles to which the Eastern Orthodox have serious objections. Here we seem to subscribe to attacks on the Eastern Orthodox

doctrinal position. It is difficulties of this kind that need removal before there can be reunion between the Eastern Orthodox and the other confessions. The Orthodox cannot yet say that the Anglicans, for example, are identical with themselves in faith; if they could say so, they would be in communion with them. But they do not therefore say definitely that the Anglicans are *not* identical with the Orthodox in faith. They do not necessarily say that the Western Catholics are *not* of the Orthodox faith. They neither deny the West nor affirm the West as an equal sister-church in the period in which there has been a schism. But they deny the charges brought against themselves.

The Orthodox often thinks of his own communion as being the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, very much as the Roman Catholic thinks of the Roman obedience as the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Russian Church and the Greek Church claim to be the only regular branches of the true Church in their respective countries. And many Orthodox would treat Romanism and Protestantism as false religions. The more zealous Orthodox certainly take an attitude to the rest of Christendom not unlike the Roman Catholic attitude. There can be only one true doctrine, and all doctrines which reject it or disagree with it are necessarily false. Orthodoxy is the true form of Christianity and reunion can only be regarded as the return of the heterodox to Orthodoxy. There is a dangerous tendency to overlook the existence of this attitude in the East, or to think that it is confined to some of the older people. It is probably held with most reflection upon it and most deliberation by some of the younger Orthodox in France and America. It is a perfectly firm and seriously-held position. But it has to be remembered that the chief criterion of Orthodoxy is not being Eastern or being Byzantine; it is not even being in communion with the Church of Moscow or the Church of Constantinople or the Church of Jerusalem. It is identity of doctrine, to which canonical communion gives outward expression. One can easily and simply deny that the Church of England is in communion with Rome or with Constantinople. It is a more complicated question whether the Church of England holds a doctrine in contradiction with Eastern Orthodox doctrine or not. The call to unity, from this standpoint, is primarily a recall to *truth*. Visible unity follows truth. And where there is doctrinal agreement there is an element of visible unity.

If the Orthodox believe in the " infallibility of the Church," this signifies that, in their view, there will always be an Orthodox Church, even although it may be reduced to a small remnant and the vast majority of the Christian world may be heretical. It is possible that, under the pressure of the present situation, the Orthodox Church in Russia and the Russian sphere of influence, and the Orthodox Church in Greece and the Near East, may fall into heresies of one kind or another, at least as far as the official leadership of the Church is concerned. But there will then be separated from those new heresies some body of Orthodox, even if only in a very small number of parishes or dioceses, with an episcopate in sufficient numbers to ensure continuity. That is the belief of those who give a positive meaning to the idea of the infallibility of the Church among the Orthodox. Some would

prefer to avoid the actual word infallibility. But they would agree that Orthodoxy can neither die out nor be absorbed. The principle at stake is the final victory of truth and of the principle of unity among brethren represented by the *Apostolic Circle* of essentially equal sister-churches.

It is quite obvious that the independence of local Churches in their government easily leads to the situation in which the local Church in any one country or state becomes a national Church, whether that Church is a state Church or not. Certain national and patriotic sentiments are fed and encouraged by the fact that the Church in the country A is not in a position to receive orders from an Archbishop or Patriarch or other authority which belongs to the country B. In quite an early period, lands like Persia under the Sassanids, and Armenia under her own Christian rulers, made difficulties about the Christian Churches in their dominions seeming in any way to be dependent upon the Church in the Roman Empire. Later, Moslem rulers were jealous for the independence of the Christian Church in Egypt and Syria and Palestine from dictation either by Constantinople or by Rome. The Roman Catholics suffered more than the Orthodox under the Turks, at one stage of the growth of the Turkish Empire, because Rome stood for the political danger of a renewal of the Crusades. There is one curious modern instance of the kind of thing I mean. The Russian Church had missionaries in Japan in the later part of the nineteenth century, converted some thousands of Japanese to Russian Orthodoxy, and very rapidly developed a native ministry of Japanese parochial clergy under a Russian missionary bishop. When the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 broke out, the Russian bishop stayed in Japan, where his movements were supervised but he was not interned. The Japanese Orthodox clergy, who had been trained by Russians and naturally felt a conflict of loyalties, asked the bishop about the question of state-prayers in time of war. He told them to arrange a service of prayers for the victory of the Japanese army and to bless the Orthodox soldiers of that army, although he himself did not participate in such services. After the war the fact became known in Russia and received very favourable comment in the organs of the Russian Church. This was when the country was smarting under defeat from Japan. The other instance I have in mind is the Greek War of Independence. Not only in Greece itself, but in Constantinople as well, in Cyprus, and in other places far from any actual fighting, the Greek Orthodox bishops were hanged as hostages when the war of Greek independence began; in this way the Turks sought to terrorize the whole Christian population of the Ottoman Empire and to limit the scope of the Greek rebellion. But as the war advanced the bishops in different districts assumed different positions. The Church in rebel Greece formed a provisional ecclesiastical Council independent of the Patriarch of Constantinople. The new Patriarch of Constantinople, whose predecessor had been hanged for aiding the rebels, excommunicated the rebels and declared the Sultan to be the lawful sovereign of the Greeks under his jurisdiction. When the war was over and peace had been made, after a certain interval of time and certain negotiations over formalities, the Patriarchate of Constantinople declared the Church of the Kingdom of Greece to be an independent sister-church. No

one then either blamed the Church of Athens for supporting the rebellion or blamed the Church of Constantinople for assuming an attitude of hostility to the rebellion. Similarly the Orthodox Church in the Soviet sphere of influence may now take an attitude very different from that of the Greek Patriarchates, the Church of Greece, and some Orthodox groups in Western Europe and America, in relation to the problems now facing the world. I am not suggesting that there are only two Orthodox attitudes. As a matter of fact there are a large number of different attitudes to the main problem of the relations between the Church and Communism. But there are certainly at least two attitudes which are in conflict. It does not follow that reconciliation will not be effected at a later stage. Nor does it even follow that those who take opposite attitudes regard one another as bad men or bad members of the Church, whatever statements may be made on a superficial level. I have said earlier in this lecture that there is a real danger that the leaders of some part of the Orthodox communion may fall into heresy under the pressure of the present situation, and that, if they do, the plain duty of the Orthodox who realize the fact is to anathematize them. If any one says that either Capitalism or Communism is to be regarded as part of the Creed or of the eternal Gospel, ἀφοριζέσθω—let him be anathema. If any ideology or theory which is alien to the Christian faith is proclaimed as part of the Christian faith, we may well hope and believe that those who really believe in Orthodoxy will repudiate the proclamation and its proclaimants. But there is a sphere in which the local Church speaks to the particular local situation, giving, as far as possible, in all sincerity, the message of God to that situation.

## THE EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

*(continued)*

*by* GEORGE FLOROVSKY, D.D., S.T.D.

### V

On the other hand, the Church in the East has also to enlarge her vision and to meet the Churches of the West in a fellowship of common search. As a matter of fact this meeting has been taking place already for centuries. It is simply historically untrue that the Christian East is meeting the Christian West for the first time in our day. It has been in contact with Western theology for quite some time. Lutheran and Reformed textbooks of theology were in common use in Russian seminaries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the Western original can be often detected behind the works of Orthodox theologians themselves. They had themselves to relearn the dialects of the Fathers in recent times. It was really most unfortunate and fatal that the first meeting with the West, and the long conversation that followed, took the form of a "pseudomorphosis" and eclecticism, and many memories of past conflicts and misunderstandings are still rather sad and painful. But is "pseudomorphosis" and imitation the only possible form of meeting or the most natural one? The

true meeting will take place only when the common ground has been rediscovered.

It is perhaps but natural that after so many centuries of divorce and estrangement, of conflict and competition, one is inclined to take sides. The major danger and temptation of our present epoch is that Westerners will possibly overemphasize and exaggerate their Western peculiarity, acting as representatives of the Western tradition only. Surely Eastern people are in the danger of doing just the same. This attitude is not, of course, a safe and promising ground for meeting or the true reintegration of distorted tradition. Yet it is just this reintegration that is, in my belief, the impending duty and the major task of Christianity to-day. No synthesis or reconciliation can ever be achieved simply by arithmetical operations, either by subtraction of all distinctions or by addition of all differences. Synthesis is neither a common denominator nor a sum total.

It is my personal conviction, or, if you prefer, my private opinion, that the real reintegration of Christian tradition should be sought in a neo-patristic synthesis. The first step to be taken is that we should learn to read and study the Fathers not merely as historical documents, as links of a "venerable" but obsolete "tradition," as pieces of antiquity, but as living masters from whom we may receive the message of life and truth. If I am not mistaken it is just this that is going on in our days in the large field of theological research. The fact that many recent theologians are going back to the school of the Fathers, even if they find it hard to walk in their steps, is the greatest ecumenical promise of our age.

I have been moving deliberately in this paper along general lines and have not mentioned any particular topics or doctrinal points. My first purpose was to explain the ultimate meaning of the meeting of the West and the East, which is taking place, or may take place, within the contemporary ecumenical movement. Once more, it is not merely a geographical reintegration, but precisely a rediscovery of the common past and of the common ground. Nor do I suggest that the synthesis has been already achieved or could be achieved speedily or soon. Certainly it will not be accomplished in our lifetime. Yet the process has already begun. We are not allowed to dream glorious dreams and to indulge in glorious visions. The prospect is rather unusually dark. In our private life night is the time for peace and rest. But on the larger scale, historic nights, the periods of doom, are just the high time to watch and work.

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